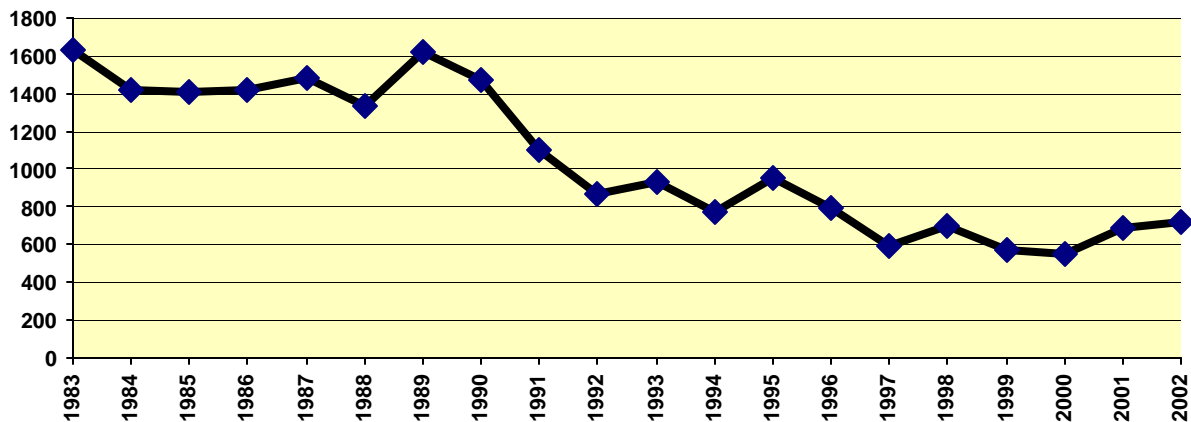


# BURGLARY

Burglary describes the unlawful entry of a structure to commit a felony or theft. The use of force to gain entry is not required to classify an offense as burglary. Burglary attempts are included in the total.

**Burglary in Cambridge, 1983-2002**



**688 reported in 2001 · 720 reported in 2002**

Although larceny occurs four times as often as burglary, the latter crime is deemed a more serious crime, since it usually involves breaking into someone's home or business, through forceful means. There is a great variation in technique employed by the perpetrators to enter the residences or businesses. The "amateur" burglars most likely smash windows or enter unoccupied residences or buildings. The "professional" burglars on the other hand are more sophisticated in their methods, disabling alarms, stealing more high-priced items, such as paintings and oriental rugs.

The professional burglar who was once a prolific dilemma in the City, subsided in the late eighties and early nineties, until recently as the burglary totals are back on the rise. The professional burglar is

characterized as committing between 50-100 burglaries throughout the year. Burglary reached an all time low in 2000, however 2001 reported a 25% increase from 2000 and again in 2002, an increase of 5% was reported.

Burglaries in Cambridge are evenly spread throughout the day, with business breaks occurring at night and on weekends, and residential breaks occurring during working hours. Seldom does a resident or business owner encounter a burglar, and only very rarely (except in the case of domestic burglaries) does a resident come to harm during a burglary.

For the purpose of analysis, the crime of burglary is divided into two categories: Commercial Burglary and Residential Burglary ("housebreaks").

	2001	2002	% Change
Commercial Burglary	135	198	+46.7%
Residential Burglary	553	522	-5.7%
Total	688	720	+4.7%

## COMMERCIAL BURGLARY

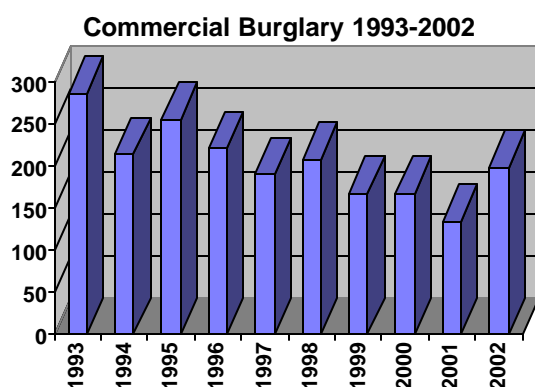
Commercial burglaries, more commonly referred to as commercial breaks, is the unlawful entry into a commercial establishment, including a business, government, or retail establishment. Over the past ten years, a remarkable 62% decrease has been recorded, however this year reports a 46.7% increase from the 2001 total.

Commercial burglars target miscellaneous establishments. The type of business targeted speaks volumes about the offender's likely status and style, and commercial breaks can therefore be categorized by the type of premises entered. Most breaks fall into one of six broad categories:

- **Smash & Grab** burglaries target display windows along major routes. The burglar runs or drives up, smashes the window, steals valuables from the immediate area of the window, and runs off. The entire enterprise may take less than a minute. Nine such incidents were reported during 2002, a majority of which occurred on Massachusetts Avenue.
- **Retail** burglars pry or smash their way into stores, and other locations with cash registers on the premises. They are hoping for cash left in the register or the safe and may grab some cigarettes or a stack of lottery tickets on the way out. Eighteen retail burglaries were reported for the past twelve months.

TYPE	2001	2002
Business Offices	16	53
Other	44	51
Bar/Restaurant	17	34
Retail Establishments	32	18
School	12	10
Industrial/Construction	11	8
Auto Sales/Service	3	8
Laundromat/Cleaners	3	5
Government Building	1	3
Church	1	3

- **Restaurant/Bar** burglars often cross multiple jurisdictions, breaking into similar franchises, looking for safes. These establishments reported 34 of the total, most of which taking place during the end of the year.
- **Business** burglars enter real estate offices, law firms, technology companies, and other offices, looking for laptop computers and other expensive equipment. Reporting the most of any type of establishment, business offices accounted for 53 of the 198 incidents reported.
- **Construction Site** thieves are a special breed of burglars who know how to select, steal, and sell expensive power tools, building supplies, and heavy equipment. They are often in the business themselves, and may have done some sub-contract work on the site that they target. Eight incidents were reported at construction sites, three of which occurred overnight in late October. A suspect was named in the three cases, however no arrests were made.
- **Safe Crackers** are a new type of burglar to the City. In these instances, the perpetrators are entering businesses with high cash intake, such as restaurants and bars, and take cash in most instances. During 2002, thirteen incidents of this nature took place.



- **Church** burglars are usually homeless individuals with substance abuse problems. They enter lightly secured houses of worship, looking for petty cash and easily fenced items. Three incidents were reported, two of which occurred at one Islamic Mosque.
- **School** burglars are generally juveniles, breaking into their own schools to vandalize or to steal computers and other expensive goods they see every day. Schools accounted for ten of the incidents during 2002, in two of these cases, an arrest was made.

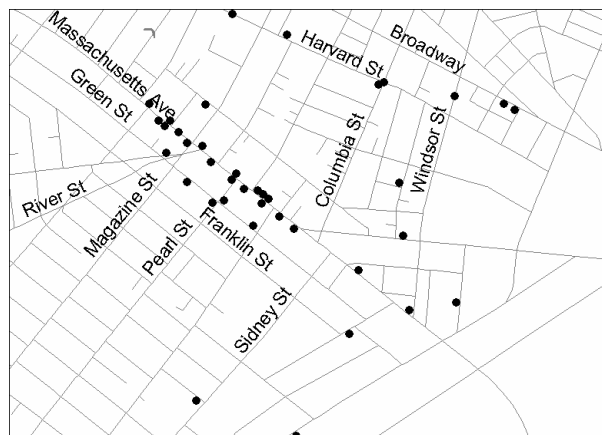
The majority of the commercial breaks have been reported at business offices, an annual topper for establishment type, and ended the year with 53, or 27% of the 198 breaks. Business offices have been targeted for the electronic equipment, particularly laptops. Consistent with the pattern of commercial breaks, the business office breaks took place during the nighttime, when the employees were not present. Due to the numerous burglaries that do not show any sign of forceful entry, employees who have an access or security card may have done the burglaries. Within the past few years, business offices have been targeted more while retail establishments have

become less prominent. During 2002, retail establishments comprised 18 of the total commercial breaks, or nine percent, a substantial decrease since just five years ago retail establishments totaled 26% of the commercial breaks. Bars/Restaurants compromised a large amount of the breaks with 34, 17% of the total number of commercial breaks.

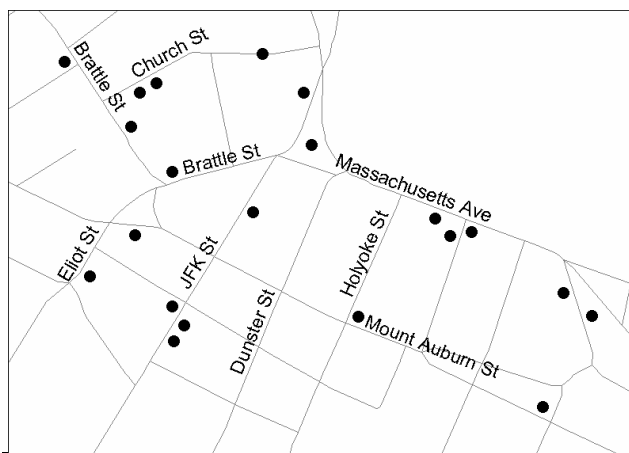
## GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF COMMERCIAL BURGLARIES

AREA	2000	2001	2002	CHANGE 01-02	% OF TOTAL
East Cambridge/Galleria	21	16	26	+62.5%	13.0%
Kendall Square/M.I.T.	30	9	10	+11%	5.1%
Inman Square/Harrington	26	26	21	-19.2%	10.6%
Central Square	25	23	57	+147.8%	28.8%
Cambridgeport/Riverside	2	12	3	-75%	1.5%
Bay Square/Upper Broadway	14	10	8	-20%	4%
Harvard Square	10	10	28	+180%	14.1%
Massachusetts Avenue 1500–1900	8	6	6	NC	3%
Porter Square/North Cambridge	15	15	15	NC	7.6%
Alewife/West Cambridge	17	8	24	+200%	10.6%

Geographically, Central Square was the dominant district of commercial breaks, reporting 57 of the 198 total breaks or 29% of the citywide total. The numbers from 2002 are a 147% increase from 2001's total of 23, which is about average for that district. This is a commanding lead of 28 incidents over the area with the second most breaks, Harvard Square, with 29 reported breaks. Breaks concentrated in the last four months of the year, with 38 breaks from September 1 to year's end. During this time period, the perpetrators gained entry by forcing the door open. Notably the first weekend in November recorded eleven breaks, eight of which were at the same office building on Massachusetts Avenue; all were entered by prying the door open and ransacked. Later that week, a male Cambridge resident was arrested for breaking into an apartment on Magazine St, in the Central Square area. This person was also suspected in over 30 breaks in the Central Square area.



The Central Square commercial breaks concentrated on Massachusetts Avenue. Central Square became a prime target near the end of the year.



Harvard Square reported twenty-eight incidents in 2002, a 180% increase from the totals in 2001. During the first six months of 2002, this area reported more than the entire total of 2001. No prevalent patterns emerged, however this increase is rather significant. Harvard Square is a popular commercial, retail, and dining area and those businesses were the types of establishments burglarized. In these burglaries, the perpetrators targeted cash from commercial establishments. Laptops and other electronics were stolen from business offices. The commercial breaks concentrated on Tuesdays and

Retail and commercial establishments as opposed to the businesses in Central Square were targeted in

Wednesdays and on the weekends during the hours the establishments were closed.

Alewife/West Cambridge also reported a significant increase in commercial breaks this year, of 200%, from the 8 incidents reported just last year. The area had been on the decline since 1995, when the incidents in one year exceeded 30. Last year was an all-time low for that district, but incidents have risen to past levels, with 24 incidents reported in 2002. The breaks in this area concentrated on Huron and Concord Avenues, as these areas reported over half of all breaks in the neighborhoods. Concentrating in business offices, the perpetrators removed laptops in most instances; however, cash and other expensive equipment were also targeted. The Laundromat break problem of 2000 has failed to return this year, only reporting two breaks from Laundromats in 2002. As in the Central Square district, this area became hot during the past four months of the year, indicating the perpetrators may be the same suspects as in the Central Square breaks.

Hot areas during the first six months of the year, such as Inman Square, cooled down during the last six months, finishing the year with a negative percent change from 2001 by almost 20%. Cambridgeport as well reported a significant decrease in breaks, reporting just three, a 75% decrease from 2001. This is the second time in three years this area has reported such strikingly low numbers.

Eight arrests were made this year at commercial establishments. All the arrested perpetrators were males from Cambridge, Boston, or Somerville. The men were arrested either following witness leads, or were found when police searched the building after the businesses' alarms were set off.

#### **Preventing Commercial Burglary**

- Light all entrances; include alleys, with vandal-proof fixtures. Leave lights on inside the establishment overnight and on weekends.
- Glass doors should be made from burglar-resistant glass and should be well lit.
- Keep weeds, shrubbery, and debris away from doors and windows. Lock up tools and ladders that could invite a break or make a burglar's job easier.
- Install an alarm system, check it regularly, and investigate reasons behind any false alarms. Post a conspicuous notice that you have an alarm system.
- Leave empty cash drawers open after hours.

# Commercial Burglaries in 2002

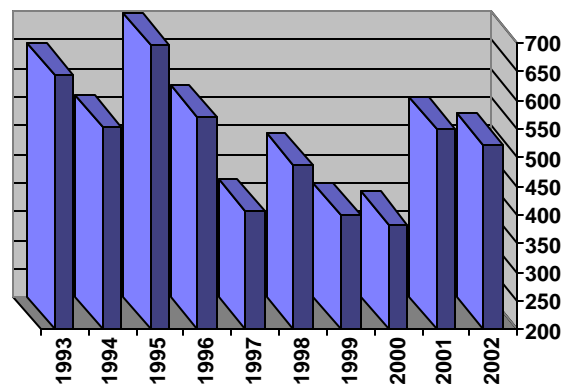


## RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY

Residential burglaries, or “housebreaks,” have declined almost 6 percent in the past year with a total of 522. This is significant, considering residential burglary had been the leading crime during the early part of 2002. During the first three months, the housebreak total alone was more than the total burglary during that time period in 2001. The pinnacle occurred in February with a 180% increase from the 2001 total. Again in late spring and early summer, the breaks began to afflict the city as one of the top crimes during the summer.

Despite the large increase in breaks during the first six months, the ending numbers per neighborhood do not reflect the two escalations; aside from the 220% increase in Strawberry Hill and 77% increase in the Agassiz neighborhood. The arrests, patrol, and investigative efforts were able to curb the rising numbers, to end the year with fewer breaks than the previous year by 31. Mid-Cambridge, the neighborhood reporting the most breaks, registered a 24% decrease, Cambridgeport reported a 16% increase, and Peabody reported the third most breaks with 55, a 34% increase.

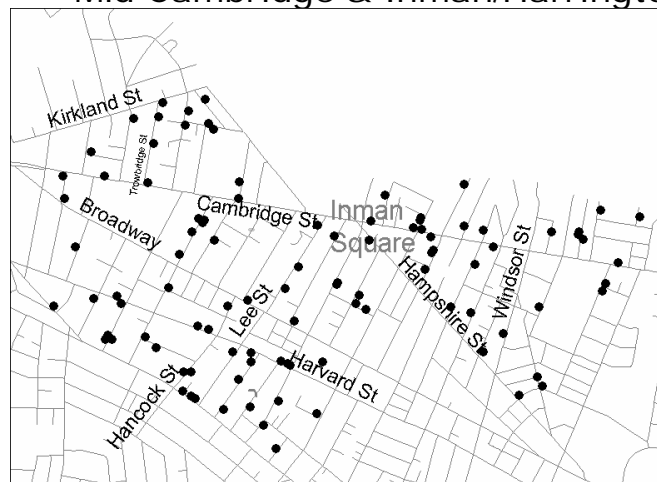
Residential Burglary, 1993-2002



## GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY

AREA	2000	2001	2002	CHANGE 01-02	% OF TOTAL
East Cambridge	32	37	40	+8.1%	7.7%
M.I.T. Area	2	0	0	N.C.	0.0%
Inman/Harrington	25	47	37	-21.3%	7%
Area 4	51	67	49	-26.9%	9.4%
Cambridgeport	43	56	65	+16.1%	12.5%
Mid-Cambridge	79	113	86	-23.9%	16.5%
Riverside	38	61	39	-36.1%	7.5%
Agassiz	20	26	46	+76.9%	8.8%
Peabody	34	41	55	+34.1%	10.5%
West Cambridge	21	41	35	-14.6%	6.7%
North Cambridge	34	59	50	-15.3%	9.6%
Cambridge Highlands	0	0	3	Inc.	0.5%
Strawberry Hill	5	5	16	+220%	3.1%

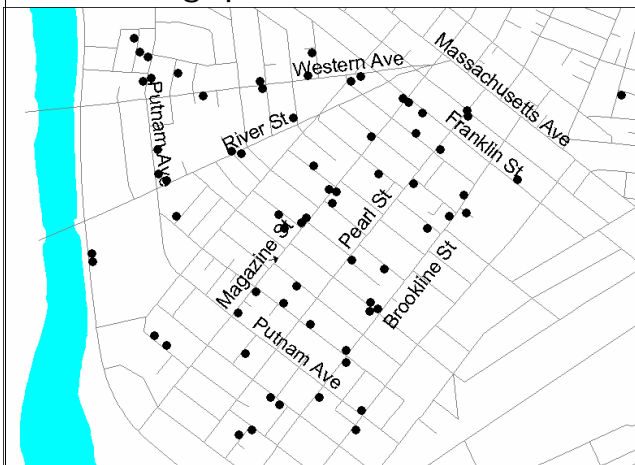
### Mid-Cambridge & Inman/Harrington



Mid-Cambridge and Inman/Harrington contributed 23% of the housebreaks in 2002. For the third year in a row, Mid-Cambridge tops the list of neighborhoods for number of housebreaks, continuously a historical trend. Seventy percent of these neighborhoods' breaks were reported in the first six months, only 30 were reported in Mid-Cambridge and 8 in Inman after June 31. In late June, the emerging breaks pattern concentrated on the Somerville border. Apartments were targeted, eleven of which experienced multiple breaks. The method of entering the residences included the perpetrators knocking on the door of the residences to determine if the residents were present, and if not, forcing a door or window open to steal any easily portable object: jewelry, laptops, visible cash,

and electronics. The burglarized residences concentrated on Cambridge, Harvard, Elm, Dana, Ellery, and Hancock Streets. In both neighborhoods, the breaks concentrated during the early afternoon hours, while the residents were at work or school. A decline in mid spring is attributed to the arrest of a Somerville man and two accomplices in a residential break on Antrim Street. This Somerville resident was suspected of North Cambridge housebreaks and the arrest of three men in July, two of whom resided in Somerville, aided in nearly ceasing the summer housebreak pattern.

### Cambridgeport & Riverside

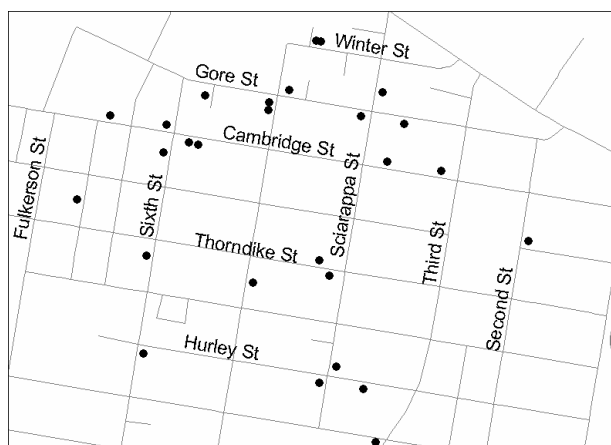
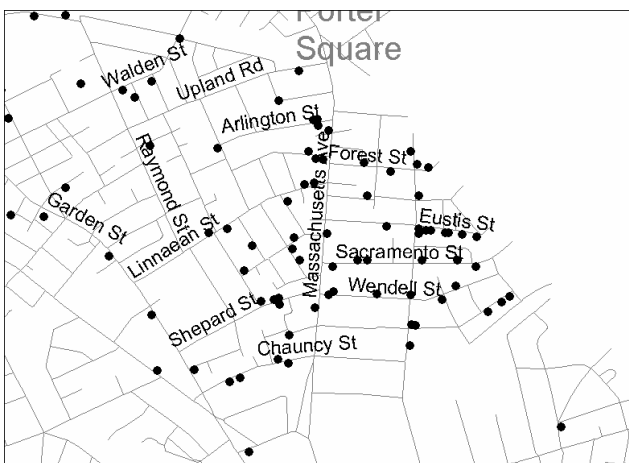


These two neighborhoods were a significant part of the housebreak pattern during the first three months of the year, peaking in February. The pattern decreased due to arrests, but again in mid-June Central Square began to heat up until the July 2<sup>nd</sup> arrest of a Somerville resident, the second arrest this year of the young male. Following the mid summer pattern, the rest of the year was quiet for these two neighborhoods as only 44 of the total 104 breaks were reported. The early afternoon hours were the most likely times for the residences to be burglarized during the week. Apartment buildings were popular targets, with multiple breaks reported at buildings on Massachusetts Avenue, Franklin, Magazine, and Sidney Streets. The perpetrators would force their way into the apartment through windows or doors, stealing jewelry,

laptops, and bicycles. Tight clusters of breaks concentrated in the 100-300 block of Brookline Street, 0-100 block of Magazine Street, and the 0-300 block of Putnam Avenue.

## Agassiz & Peabody

Agassiz and Peabody typically record low to moderate housebreak numbers, but this year accounted for the hottest pattern in 2002, due to the uncharacteristic numbers and the two seasonal patterns reported. Agassiz reported a 76% increase, while a 34% increase was recorded in Peabody. Both neighborhoods reported thirty breaks within the first six months. Agassiz reported 13 breaks during the first quarter; in 2001 no breaks were reported. The breaks concentrated in tight clusters on Massachusetts Avenue, Eustis, Sacramento, Forest, Wendell, Oxford and Shepard Streets, all along the Somerville border. In mid-May, the breaks escalated again, mainly along the Somerville border, along Eustis, Sacramento Streets, and Massachusetts Avenue. Concentrating during mid-week in the late morning-early afternoon, apartments were targeted along with the above two patterns. The arrests of Somerville men, mentioned above, nearly ceased these breaks as well. The most prominent pattern of the first three months was the breaks concentrated in tight clusters on Massachusetts Avenue, Eustis, Sacramento, Forest, Wendell, Oxford and Shepard Streets, all along the Somerville border.

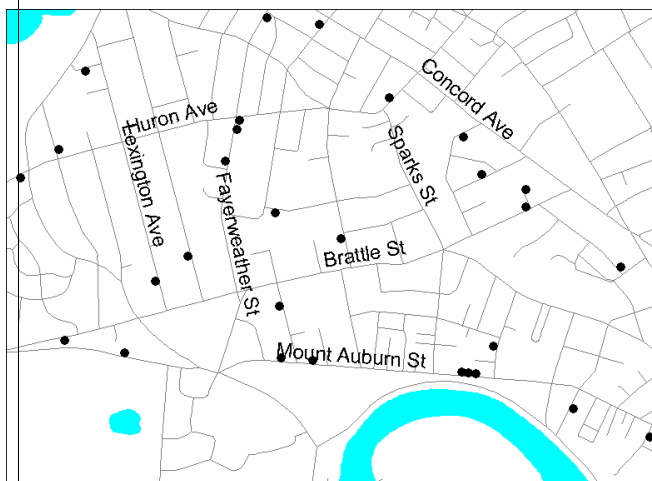


## East Cambridge

The East Cambridge breaks concentrated on and near Cambridge Street. The breaks were reported between the 200-500 block of Cambridge Street on the first Wednesday of February and March, between 1:00-3:00 p.m. Throughout the year, Cambridge Street was a target of perpetrators. From early September to early October, ten housebreaks were reported at one apartment building on Museum Way. In five of the breaks, the doors were unlocked and valuable portable electronic devices and jewelry was stolen. The management was cleaning and painting the building, and the workers may be suspected of the thefts.

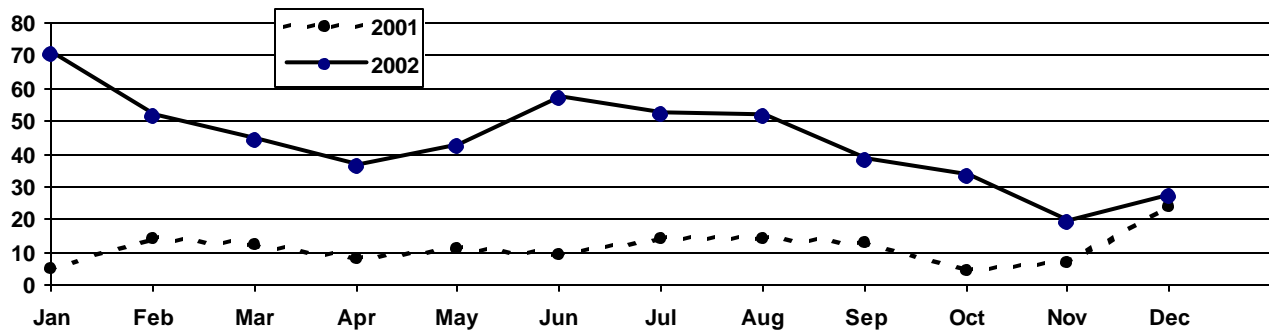
## West Cambridge

West Cambridge began a pattern in early March where Oriental rugs, silverware, and antiques were targeted. These professional burglars were entering the affluent homes of West Cambridge during various times of the day to steal expensive items. This pattern slowed down in early April and an incident similar to the rug pattern in mid-July, however no other incidents were reported and the pattern was quiet the rest of the year as the neighborhood reported a 14% decline from 2001. There were multiple breaks on Mount Auburn Street, including a tight cluster as well as multiple breaks on Fayerweather Street. In September-October, there was a four week span of weekend housebreaks reported on Mount Auburn Street and nearby street



apartment building. The perpetrators were entering the

## 2001 vs. 2002 MONTHLY HOUSEBREAK TOTALS



### Preventing Housebreaks

- Try “casing” your own home, at night and during the day. Attempt to gain access to your home when the doors and windows are locked and “secure.” Make sure you have some identification on you in case your neighbors call the police.
- Doors should be made from strong wood or metal and should be locked with a deadbolt. Install guards on windows that prevent them from being raised more than a few inches.
- If you live in an apartment building that has a main entryway, make sure that security is enforced at the main door. Never prop open the door or let someone in behind you. Report residents who do this to your landlord.
- When you go away, even for the evening, leave a light or two on (perhaps on a timer) as well as the television or radio.
- Keep a small amount of cash on a table near your main door. If the money is gone when you come home, you will know immediately that someone has been in your residence.
- Consider buying motion sensor lights outside your home and out of reach so the burglars cannot unscrew the light. Also, buy variable light timer to activate lights in your home



# TIMELINE OF ESCALATING HOUSEBREAKS IN CAMBRIDGE

## **JANUARY:**

Seventy housebreaks were reported in January, a drastic 180% increase from 2001's first quarter totals. There were three patterns identified in Cambridge, two of which were monitored through early March: Cambridgeport, Area 4, and

**FEBRUARY:** February ended with a total of 53 housebreaks, 65% more than 2001's total (32). This is a large drop-off from January, however the increase from 2001 is significant. Added to the patterns were Riverside to the Cambridgeport pattern, the Inman/Harrington neighborhood to the Mid-Cambridge pattern, and Peabody to the Agassiz pattern. Also, there was an evident pattern in East Cambridge beginning, on the first Wednesday of the month.

## **MARCH:**

The housebreaks that may have spiked in mid-February are now on a downward spiral. Over the first 45 days of the quarter, 105 housebreaks were recorded. A number of key arrests and investigative units should receive the credit and attribution for interdicting this trend before it was completely out of control. The breaks returned to traditional numbers through mid-

**MAY-JULY:** After about a month of lower totals, the housebreaks began to heat up again in the Agassiz and Peabody neighborhoods. Included in this pattern, were six housebreaks reported in a tight cluster on the Somerville line over Memorial Day weekend. The breaks continued throughout the two months. In early June, the Central Square area was included in the pattern, and these two areas accounted for 80% of all breaks in June. In early July, a known housebreak offender from Somerville was arrested as well as his brother and a third offender in late July. Once these offenders were arrested, the housebreak numbers decreased and the housebreak pattern

## **SEPTEMBER-**

**OCTOBER:** In West Cambridge, a weekend break pattern emerged, as residences were broken into for four weeks straight, mainly along Mount Auburn Street. The breaks occurred during the early morning hours, entering residences through unknown means.

**2002:** Following a year that began with peaks of housebreaks on an 180% increase from the previous year, but ending with 31 incidents less is remarkable. The monthly totals range from 70 in January to 19 in November. The patterns of housebreaks emerged across the city, however there were areas such as Agassiz and Peabody that reported most of the action. Neighborhoods with relatively quiet numbers in the past reported abnormally high numbers during the proliferation of breaks. However, the work of patrol, investigators and the community helped to almost end the housebreaks before the patterns could become more

# RESIDENTIAL BURGLARIES IN 2002

